CHAPTER IX

HOW TO MAKE A GREAT-COAT

GREAT-COATS can be made in a variety of materials and styles, but none of them need present any difficulties to the worker who has successfully completed a costume coat. The method of making up is very similar, except that an accurate fit is not essential or even desirable in a top-coat. The work is not so detailed, a largeness of effect being aimed at.

The chief point is to cut the garment loose enough to fit easily over other clothing, especial care being taken to make the armholes wide.

A silk lining or half-lining adds greatly to comfort, a cotton one is likely to stick to a woollen dress worn underneath, and will make the donning of a top-coat an unsightly struggle instead of the gracefully slipped into affair that is desired.

The material should be laid out in the usual way, and the pattern placed lengthwise. If overlaid seams are chosen, extra wide turnings should be allowed for.

If the cloth is not of sufficient thickness to be an adequate protection against the cold, an interlining may be added, bringing the weight up to the desired standard. The interlining should be of flannel or other woollen fabric of similar thickness. It is wise to shrink the latter before cutting (see p. 101). If the interlining is to be throughout, the seams should be lapped one over the other and catch-stitched together (p. 18), then tacked with small even stitches to the inside seams of the coat. Tack to armholes, inner side of front facings, and neck with even stitches. The lower edge of a whole
interlining should be cut off two inches above the turn-up of the coat, the hem of the latter to be brought up to it, and both edges sewn together with catch-stitching. Then the coat must be lined all through with silk or fancy material.

If the interlining is only to be brought as far as the waist, the side seams must be lapped over one another, and the shoulder seams are treated in a similar way, all joins being caught to the corresponding seams of the coat. The edges of the interlining are tacked to the neck, armholes, and front facings, the waist line hangs loose from the coat. The silk half-lining is cut an inch longer, to cover the termination of the interlining, and hemmed up at the bottom.

If the coat collar is of the usual tailored pattern, it will need lining with tailor’s canvas in a similar way to that described on page 114, but if a fur or halter collar is chosen, a soft linen interlining will be employed. In either scheme the coat fronts should be stiffened with tailor’s canvas under the facings, which will extend partly over the shoulders.

If the coat is only part lined, all raw edges of seams below the waist, and the edges of the pockets, should be bound with seam binding or strips of bias silk matching
the colour of the material. The front facings should have seam binding sewn flat over their edges, and slipstitched down to the coat; care must be taken that the stitches do not go through to the right side. The bottom hem of a partly lined coat must be treated in a like manner (Fig. 171).

Should the top-coat be made of Harris tweed or any other thick material, the collar and fronts should be turned over the edges of the canvas and catch-stitched down to it, the collar and front facings turned under at the indicated lines, and the edges of folds tacked to the edges of the coat. Machine together an eighth of an inch from turnings; great care must be taken to keep the line of stitching level, so that the upper and under sections are sewn simultaneously at equal distances from the edge. A second line of machine-stitching can be made half an inch inside the first—this will keep the edge a good shape.

Making and Fixing Coat Cuffs.—Each cuff must be cut in double cloth, with extra turning allowances on the bottom edges. The interlining should be canvas or of whatever fabric is used in making the collar. No turnings are allowed on the top or ends unless the cuff is a continuous one. (If the latter is the case, allowances are made on the ends and bottom of interlining cuff, but not at the top.) Tack the interlining to upper section of material, turn over the ends and top of the latter, and catch-stitch to interlining. Turn in the ends and top of under section an eighth of an inch inside the traced line, tack to upper section so that its edge is an eighth of an inch inside the edge of the latter, and slipstitch in place (Fig. 172). The cuff edges may be further finished with machine-stitching to match the coat.
A FUR COLLAR

Should the cuff be a continuous one the ends of the material sections should be seamed together, and the interlining ends lapped one over the other at the turning lines and catch-stitched; otherwise the working is identical.

The sleeve is turned inside out, and the under section of cuff is seamed on to it, in the correct position as indicated by the pattern. Cut off the surplus turning on under section, press the seam and pull upper section right over the join. Roll the cuff over the edge of the sleeve to the right side, and hem lining to upper section two inches above the turn-up.

Handling Fur.—Top-coats are often completed by a large fur collar and cuffs, so a little guidance in the handling of pelts will be helpful. The pattern should always be laid against the pelt with the fur side uppermost, to get an idea which is the best part and how it lies in conjunction with the pattern. Having satisfied yourself on this point, reverse the pelt so that the hair is down and the skin uppermost, stretch over a board, pegging down with drawing-pins. Place the pattern in the same position as you had it on the reverse side, and draw the shape on the skin with pencil. Remove the pattern, and cut along the marked lines with a sharp knife; always cut from the wrong side, so as not to cut the hair. If any joins are necessary, be sure that the hair runs the same way in both pieces. Pelts should be sewn with a fur needle, failing that an ordinary short needle should be used, and strong cotton thread. Arrange the pelts edge to edge, then push a fine card between, so that its top edge comes just under the line of the join; this will prevent the fur becoming entangled with the thread. The seam should be made with a fine oversewing (p. 34); only the very edges of the pelts should be caught by the stitching. When the pelt is straightened out, the join will resemble a ridge; this should be damped, and the skin stretched on a board, and left
for some hours until it is thoroughly dry. If it is a long-haired pelt, it should be stretched with the hair upwards; in the case of a short-haired skin, the fur will lie against the board. Cut edges should be finished with seam binding matching the colour of the fur. The binding should be finely sewn to the edge of the pelt, then turned over on to the skin side, and the other edge of binding sewn with catch-stitching to pelt (Fig. 178).

The pelt should be attached to garment by hemming through the binding. The back of the fur collar and cuffs may be finished with material or a satin lining, whichever is the most suitable for the design of the garment.

**How to Make Ornamental Seams**

There are many types of overlaid seams used in tailoring, and the one to be employed on any given garment must be left entirely to the judgment of the worker. It will be remembered that the type of seam selected for the skirt must also be carried out on the coat.

The lines of decorative machine-stitching must be entirely regular and should, of course, be worked from the right side of the garment. Pressing needs to be thorough, or a bulky seam will be the result.

A double-stitched welt is useful for tweed great-coats, and can be used instead of an ordinary seam for joining
purposes. Wide seam allowances must be provided for the making of all ornamental seams.

An Open Welt is very often used on coats and skirts, either as a seam finish, or in attaching panels. It resembles a vertical tuck, and its width can be suited to the taste of the worker, or adapted to the design.

Method.—Take the section to be overlaid, and turn the edge under at the traced line. Place fold thus made against the indicated line on the under material, and machine a parallel line a quarter of an inch from the edge (Fig. 174).

A Double Stitched Welt.—Take the upper piece of material which is to be overlaid on to the lower, and fold the turning under on the indicated line. Place the edge of the fold against the traced line on the under piece. Machine an eighth of an inch inside the edge. After stitching, turn the garment over to the wrong side, and cut off surplus turning on the upper piece close to the stitched line (Fig. 175) thus avoiding an unnecessary thickness of cloth. Reverse to right side again, and machine a parallel line half an inch inside the first one. The seam must be well pressed.

A Slot Seam is very useful for certain occasions. It is frequently employed to join centre front or back seams of tailored skirts, should narrow width cloth make a centre seam compulsory. The width of stitching should not exceed an inch from the seam line, otherwise, as the folds are duplicated, the spread of the seam will be clumsy (Fig. 176).

Method.—Tack the seam together along the traced lines on the wrong side as though for an ordinary seam, but do not machine up. Open turnings and press flat. Cut a strip of material three inches wide, and tack the right side against the whole length of the back of the seam (Fig. 177). Turn garment over to the right side, and machine a parallel line an inch from either side of
the seam. Pull out all tack threads, damp, and press thoroughly.

Other types of decorated seams are worked by a different method. Instead of applying the piece to be overlaid to the under one, the two pieces to be connected are seamed together on the wrong side in the usual way, and an ornamental line of stitching run in a
parallel line on one or both sides. Naturally, this seam is easier to arrange, and it is therefore much used as a finish on factory-made clothing. It is not generally employed by first-class tailors.

The working of these types of seams is very alike, and practically the only variation lies in the arrangement of the machined ornamental stitching.

Methods.—The first seam is machined together on the wrong side in the usual way, and pressed open, then stitched in a parallel line down one side (Fig. 178). The second type is worked in precisely the same manner as seam one, except that both sides of the seam are ornamented with parallel lines of stitching. The third variety is the same as the second, but it has two additional lines of decorative stitches placed an inch on either side of the original seam. It will be understood that especially wide turnings will be required.

The wrong sides of all these decorative seams must be neatened by overcasting the raw edges together.

In the case of closely woven materials which do not unravel, the cut edges may be overlaid without turning under.

A Strap Seam

Straps are applied as a finish over ordinary tailored seams; in all cases the seam should be sewn and pressed before the trimming is attached. Straps can be cut from the width or the bias of material; the latter gives the most satisfactory results, as the fabric then readily adapts itself to any curve. The width should be as wide again as the desired width of the finished strap, and all pieces should be joined and pressed to make the necessary length before converting into a strap.

Fold strip down the centre, right side out, and catch the raw edges together with loose overcasting stitches, taking care not to pull up the edges so that they overlap. Spread out the fold and press flat; the edges will come
in the middle of the under side. Tack against the seam so that the centre of the strap lies even with it. Arrange all joins in the strap as inconspicuously as possible; if necessary some of the strap should be sacrificed if a seamless length can be gained thereby. Straps should be machined to garment an eighth of an inch from either edge (Fig. 179).

Bound Seams prevent material fraying out and also impart a neat appearance to coat and dress seams that are unlined. Stitch the seam in the usual way and press open. The edges will spread a little, especially if they are curved, and this will obviate the danger of the binding pulling later on. Fold and press the seam
binding in half, and place the raw edge of the material between, tacking along so that the binding is a little fuller than the seam. Machine-stitch at edge, taking care that both upper and under edges of binding are stitched simultaneously (Fig. 180).

Another method.—Cut a bias strip of silk wide enough to bind the seam edge and with turning allowances. Arrange the strip face downwards over the seam, with the cut edges of both materials even, then machine close to the edge, or sew with running stitches. Turn the strip right over the raw edge of the material, and hem down to the other side. In the case of welted seams, the two cut edges are included in the one binding.

A Lapped Seam is used on unlined garments where the right and wrong sides should be equally neat. Lay one section of the cloth upon the other so that the traced lines lie evenly together. Turn under the edges of both top and bottom pieces so that they meet in the centre, and machine an eighth of an inch inside either folded edge (Fig. 181).

Taping a Seam.—This adds strength to the seam, and also prevents two bias edges stretching.

Place the centre of a strip of seam binding exactly over the join on the wrong side of an ordinary seam. Hem both edges of binding to seam turnings, taking care not to catch the material beneath (Fig. 182).